**Proverb Meanings**

"The best things in life are free."

We don't have to pay for the things that are really valuable, like love, friendship and good health.

"A stitch in time saves nine."

Repair something as soon as it is damaged. That's a small repair job. If not, you will have a much bigger and more expensive repair job later. Do it now and you'll need one stitch. Do it later and you'll need 9 stitches! (Why nine and not eight or ten? Because "nine" rhymes, approximately, with "time".)

* stitch (noun) = a link made with thread in sewing
* in time = not late

"Still waters run deep."

Some rivers have rough surfaces with waves. That's usually because the water is shallow and there are rocks near the surface. But deep rivers have no rocks near the surface and the water is smooth and still. "Still waters run deep" means that people who are calm and tranquil on the outside, often have a strong, "deep" personality.

* still (adjective) = calm, motionless
* deep (adjective) = going far down

"He teaches ill, who teaches all."

The unusual structure of this proverb may make it difficult to understand. It becomes easier if we change the structure to "He who teaches all teaches ill." The word "ill" here means "badly". So it means that the teacher who teaches students everything, does not teach well. A good teacher lets students discover some things for themselves.

* ill (adverb) = badly

"You can't take it with you when you die."

When we die we leave everything on earth. We don't take anything with us. Even the richest people cannot take their money with them after death. This proverb reminds us that some material things are not really so valuable as we think.

"Better untaught than ill taught."

This proverb drops the verb "to be". But we understand: "It is better not to be taught at all than to be taught badly." It's better not to learn something than to learn it badly. This idea is echoed in Pope's famous line: "A little learning is a dang'rous thing;".

* taught = past participle of verb "teach" (here used in passive voice)
* ill taught = badly taught

"Don't cross your bridges before you come to them."

Don't worry about problems before they arrive.

"Soon learnt, soon forgotten."

Something that is easy to learn is easy to forget.

"Even a worm will turn."

Everybody will revolt if driven too far. Even the lowest of people, or animals, will revolt and hit back at some stage. Even a worm, the simplest of animals, will defend itself.

* worm (noun) = small thin animal with soft body and no bones or legs
* turn (verb) = revolt, fight back

"It was the last straw that broke the camel's back."

There is a limit to everything. We can load the camel with lots of straw, but finally it will be too much and the camel's back will break. And it is only a single straw that breaks its back - the last straw. This can be applied to many things in life. People often say "That's the last straw!" when they will not accept any more of something.

* straw (noun) = dried stalk of grain (like dry piece of grass)
* camel (noun) = large long-necked animal used for riding and carrying goods in the desert

"The way to a man's heart is through his stomach."

Many women have won a man's love by cooking delicious meals for him. They fed his stomach and found love in his heart.

* way (noun) = path; route

"If the stone fall upon the egg, alas for the egg! If the egg fall upon the stone, alas for the egg!"

Life just isn't fair, and this realistic Arabic proverb recognizes that. The stone will always break the egg. Life's like that!

* alas = bad luck; pity; tough; regrettable

"Where there's a will there's a way."

If we have the determination to do something, we can always find the path or method to do it.

* will (noun) = strong determination, desire.
* way (noun) = path, method

"Marry in haste, and repent at leisure."

If we get married quickly, without thinking carefully, we may be sorry later. And we will have plenty of time to be sorry.

* in haste = quickly
* repent (verb) = feel sorry, regret
* at leisure = slowly, over time

"One tongue is enough for a woman."

Some people think that women talk too much. If they already talk too much, they don't need another tongue. One tongue is sufficient. This proverb is another way of saying that women talk too much.

* tongue (noun) = large, movable fleshy part in the mouth that we use for talking and tasting

"If you wish good advice, consult an old man."

Old people have a lot of experience. If you want to have good advice or recommendations, ask an old person, not a young one.

* wish (verb) = want, desire
* advice (noun) = recommendation as to what to do
* consult (verb) = ask; go to for advice or information

"The best advice is found on the pillow."

If we have a problem, we may find the answer after a good night's sleep. People also often say: "I'll sleep on it."

* advice (noun) = recommendation as to what to do
* pillow (noun) = cushion that you rest your head on while you sleep

"All clouds bring not rain."

We can rephrase this: "Not every cloud brings rain." And that's true. Sometimes there are many clouds in the sky, but it doesn't rain. Sometimes it's the same with problems, or what we think are problems.

"You can't tell a book by its cover."

We need to read a book to know if it's good or bad. We cannot know what it's like just by looking at the front or back cover. This proverb is applied to everything, not only books.

"Bad news travels fast."

"Bad news" means news about "bad" things like accidents, death, illness etc. People tend to tell this type of news quickly. But "good news" (passing an exam, winning some money, getting a job etc) travels more slowly.

"No news is good news."

This is like the proverb "Bad news travels fast." If we are waiting for news about someone, it's probably good if we hear nothing because "bad news" would arrive quickly.

"Live and let live."

This proverb suggests that we should not interfere in other people's business. We should live our own lives and let others live their lives. The title of the famous James Bond story *Live and Let Die* was a play on this proverb.

"Birds of a feather flock together."

"Birds of a feather" means "birds of the same type". The whole proverb means that people of the same type or sort stay together. They don't mix with people of another type.

* feather (noun) = part of the soft, light covering of a bird's body
* flock (verb) = gather in a crowd

"Tell me who you go with and I'll tell you who you are."

Similar to "Birds of a feather...", this proverb suggests that like minds stick together.

See also: [Sayings and proverbs](http://www.englishclub.com/ref/Sayings/index.htm)